



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON WORKFIRST

- *Office of Financial Management*
- *Department of Social and Health Services*
- *Employment Security Department*
- *Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development*
- *State Board for Community and Technical Colleges*
- *Department of Early Learning*

July 17, 2007

TO: WorkFirst Staff

FROM: Carole Holland, Senior WorkFirst Coordinator
Office of Financial Management

Sam Senn, Acting Assistant Secretary
Economic Services Administration, DSHS

Paul Trause, Deputy Commissioner
Work Source Operations Division, ESD

Bev Emery, Assistant Director
Community Trade and Economic Development

Jim Crabbe, Director
State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

Amie Lapp Payne, Deputy Director
Department of Early Learning

SUBJECT: **PREGNANCY TO EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY POLICY CHANGES**

Effective July 22, 2007, the Pregnancy to Employment (P to E) Pathway rules will change. **These policy changes are temporary** based on the need to implement the law immediately. Over the next several months, we will be re-evaluating the entire P to E Pathway program. The re-evaluation process will include gathering input from staff, WorkFirst partners, and stakeholders to develop policy options. During this time, we must continue to implement the required changes directed by the bill.

This memo provides you with information about the law and policy changes, parent notification process, and how the changes will impact your work.



STATE OF WASHINGTON WASHINGTON WORKFIRST

- *Office of Financial Management* • *Department of Social and Health Services*
- *Employment Security Department* • *Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development*
- *State Board for Community and Technical Colleges* • *Department of Early Learning*

Law and Policy Changes

Second Substitute Senate Bill 6016 modified the good cause reasons for which parents may be excused from participating in the WorkFirst program.

- Parents with a child under the age of one year can choose to be exempt from WorkFirst activities for up to 12 months. They can use this exemption for one or more children, but it can not exceed 12 months over the parent's lifetime.
- As with any exempt parent, we will continue to encourage and allow parents to voluntarily participate in WorkFirst activities. Staff should encourage parents to participate in activities that will help them find and keep a job. These activities include job search, training, mental health treatment, alcohol or drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, and parenting education or parenting skills.
- Parents have a personal responsibility to make a decision whether to choose this exemption. *It is not automatic; parents must choose to claim the exemption.*
- The 12-month infant exemption count starts on **August 1, 2007** for parents who have a child under the age of one year and choose to take the exemption.

Client Mailer

In late July, a one-time notification will be sent to all WorkFirst parents who are pregnant or parenting a child under 11 months old. The notification will include a brief summary of the law and policy changes, and point out that:

- WorkFirst participation is voluntary during the infant exemption period: however, parents are encouraged to participate in WorkFirst activities.
- Parents interested in taking the infant exemption should contact their case manager or WorkFirst social worker.

The mailer language is available from the WorkFirst Website at:
<http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/news/listserv/exemption.asp>.

Field Impacts

EJAS "PI" Component



STATE OF WASHINGTON WASHINGTON WORKFIRST

- *Office of Financial Management*
- *Department of Social and Health Services*
- *Employment Security Department*
- *Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development*
- *State Board for Community and Technical Colleges*
- *Department of Early Learning*

There is no change for the use of the "PI" component. Currently we identify parents who are pregnant or are parenting a child under 12 months of age with the "PI" indicator. We will continue to use this code in this manner.

NEW Infant Exemption Component Code (IE)

A new component code is available in eJAS. Component code "IE" will be used to identify parents who choose to take the infant exemption. This component code is:

- For DSHS staff use only and support services can not be generated from this component.
- ONLY to be used for parents who choose to use their exemption.
- Time limited (not to exceed 365 days).

Do not to use this code for any other reason. EJAS will count the number of days a parent has used their exemption. Using this code for any other reason will make a parent's exemption count inaccurate.

Staff will:

- Use the eJAS component code "IE" to identify the infant exemption period.
- Document the period of time a parent wants to take the infant exemption in eJAS notes under the "Pregnancy/Parenting" note type.
- Enter the "IE" with an exemption begin date (no earlier than 8/1/2007) and an end date of the elected infant exemption period, not to exceed 365 days.
- Use the Caseload Management Report (CLMR) and/or Adhoc to monitor these cases.
- Encourage parent participation in WorkFirst activities as the infant exemption is limited to 365 days in the parent's lifetime.

Future eJAS enhancements include adding:

- "IE" to the Client Accountability Report.
- A display that shows the number of days a parent has used the exemption.

Transitioning Current Cases

Processing Instructions (attached) have been developed to assist staff with transitioning parents into the new policy, including parents in sanction due to non-participation who can now choose to be exempt.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON WORKFIRST

- *Office of Financial Management*
- *Department of Social and Health Services*
- *Employment Security Department*
- *Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development*
- *State Board for Community and Technical Colleges*
- *Department of Early Learning*

Manual Updates

WAC 388-310-0300, WAC 388-310-1450 and WorkFirst Handbook Chapter 5, Section 5.1-*Pregnancy to Employment*, have been updated to reflect these changes. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Aurea Figueroa at (360) 725-4623 or FigueAL@dshs.wa.gov or Stacey Bushaw at (360)725-7622 or bushask@dshs.wa.gov.

cc:

Connie Ambrose	Bill Bergh	Cindy Mund
Bob Bowman	Barbara Bucsko	Steve Ebben
Tom Everett	Robin Thompson	Amber Gillum
Carla Gira	Denny Naughton	Amy Hatfield
David Johnson	Dori Shoji	Ken Kelnhofer
Diane Klontz	Ko Vang	Kelly Lindseth
Brent Low	Tom Medina	Sandy Miller